

AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS

The listing of claims will replace all prior versions and listings of claims in the application:

Listing of Claims:

1-16. (Canceled).

17. (Currently Amended) A device for engaging tissue, comprising:

an ~~generally~~-annular-shaped body defining a plane and disposed about a central axis extending substantially normal to the plane, the body being resiliently deformable from a substantially planar configuration lying generally in the plane towards a transverse configuration extending out of the plane, the body comprising a plurality of looped elements extending about a periphery of the body;

a plurality of tines extending from the looped elements towards the central axis of the generally annular-shaped body in the planar configuration, and generally parallel to the central axis in the transverse configuration, the tines comprising tips having a predetermined spacing from one another in the planar configuration; and

a biased spring element disposed between adjacent tines between the looped elements and tips of the tines, the biased spring element resiliently allowing the tips of the tines to be moved away from one another, the biased spring element comprising a curved inner region that limits penetration depth of the adjacent tines.

18. (Canceled)

19. (Original) The device of claim 17, wherein the looped elements comprise a series of outer curved regions connected to one another, thereby defining an endless pattern extending about the periphery of the body in the planar configuration, the tines extending from connection regions of adjacent curved regions.

20-35. (Canceled).

36. (Currently Amended) A device for engaging tissue, comprising:

~~an generally~~-annular-shaped body defining a plane and disposed about a central axis extending substantially normal to the plane, the body being resiliently deformable from a substantially planar configuration lying generally in the plane towards a transverse configuration extending out of the plane, the body comprising a plurality of curved elements defining an outer periphery of the body;

a plurality of arcuate tines extending from the curved elements towards the central axis of the generally annular-shaped body in the planar configuration, and generally parallel to the central axis in the transverse configuration; and

a biased spring element disposed between adjacent tines, the biased spring element resiliently allowing the tips of the tines to be moved away from one another and to be moved from within the substantially planar configuration lying generally in the plane towards the transverse configuration extending out of the plane, the biased spring element comprising a curved inner region that limits penetration depth of the adjacent tines.

37. (Previously Presented) The device of claim 17, wherein the plurality of tines further comprises primary tines having a first length and secondary tines having a second length.

38. (Previously Presented) The device of claim 37, wherein the first lengths of the primary tines are substantially longer than the second lengths of the secondary tines.

39. (Previously Presented) The device of claim 37, wherein the one or more secondary tines comprise tines disposed on either side of a primary tine.

40. (Previously Presented) The device of claim 17, wherein the body is biased towards the planar configuration for biasing the plurality of tines generally towards the central axis.

41. (Previously Presented) The device of claim 17, wherein the plurality of tines, the spring element, and the body are formed from a single sheet of material.

42. (Previously Presented) The device of claim 41, wherein the sheet of material comprises a superelastic alloy.

43. (Previously Presented) The device of claim 17, wherein the spring element is expandable between expanded and compressed states for increasing and reducing, respectively, a periphery of the body in the transverse orientation.

44. (Previously Presented) The device of claim 43, wherein the spring element is biased towards the compressed state.

45. (Canceled)

46. (Canceled)

47. (Canceled)

48. (Previously Presented) The device of claim 36, wherein the plurality of tines and the body are formed from a single sheet of material.

49. (Previously Presented) The device of claim 48, wherein the sheet of material comprises a superelastic alloy.

50. (New) A device for engaging tissue, comprising:

an annular-shaped body defining a plane and disposed about a central axis extending substantially normal to the plane, the body being resiliently deformable from a substantially planar configuration lying generally in the plane towards a transverse configuration extending out of the plane, the body comprising a plurality of looped elements extending about a periphery of the body, the body being biased to return to the substantially planar configuration;

a plurality of tines extending from the looped elements towards the central axis of the generally annular-shaped body in the planar configuration, and generally parallel to the central axis in the transverse configuration, the tines comprising tips having a predetermined spacing from one another in the planar configuration; and

a biased spring element disposed between adjacent tines between the looped elements and tips of the tines, the biased spring element resiliently allowing the tips of the tines to be moved away from one another, the biased spring element comprising a curved inner region that limits penetration depth of the adjacent tines.

51. (New) The device of claim 50, wherein the looped elements comprise a series of outer curved regions connected to one another, thereby defining an endless pattern extending about the periphery of the body in the planar configuration, the tines extending from connection regions of adjacent curved regions.

52. (New) The device of claim 50, wherein the plurality of tines further comprises primary tines having a first length and secondary tines having a second length.

53. (New) The device of claim 52, wherein the first lengths of the primary tines are substantially longer than the second lengths of the secondary tines.

54. (New) The device of claim 52, wherein the one or more secondary tines comprise tines disposed on either side of a primary tine.

55. (New) The device of claim 50, wherein the body is biased towards the planar configuration for biasing the plurality of tines generally towards the central axis.

56. (New) The device of claim 50, wherein the plurality of tines, the spring element, and the body are formed from a single sheet of material.

57. (New) The device of claim 56, wherein the sheet of material comprises a superelastic alloy.

58. (New) The device of claim 50, wherein the spring element is expandable between expanded and compressed states for increasing and reducing, respectively, a periphery of the body in the transverse orientation.

59. (New) The device of claim 58, wherein the spring element is biased towards the compressed state.